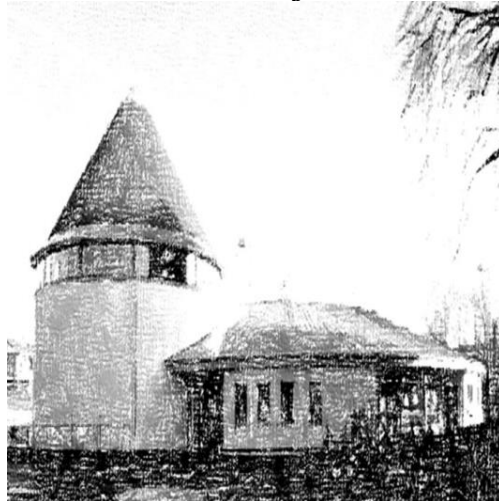




# **Priory Church In Wales (Aided) Primary School**

*‘Celebrating Creativity, Imagination and  
Belief’*



## **Attendance POLICY**

**Adopted on 18/10/22 by Headteacher and Governing Body**

**Readopted on: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (to be reviewed Autumn Term 1 2026-2027)**

**Signed                      Headteacher      (Miss Claire Pugh)**

**Signed                      Chair of Governors (Cllr . Matthew Dorrance )**

**Designated staff member with responsibility for monitoring attendance:**

Name: Sharon Lloyd / Claire Pugh

Email address: office@priory.powys.sch.uk / pennaeth@priory.powys.sch.uk

**Designated staff member for overall responsibility of attendance:**

Name: Claire Pugh

Email address: pennaeth@priory.powys.sch.uk

**Nominated member of the governing body in relation to attendance:**

Name: Kim Woods

**Contacts within the Local Authority**

**The named officer within Powys LA is**

**Ben Thomas**

**Contact Number: 07989750051**

**E-mail: ben.thomas@powys.gov.uk**

## Rationale

- Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance lies with parents, the school shares with them and the Local Authority (LA), responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.
- The school is required by law to maintain specific records and to produce specified information on the attendance of pupils.
- Statutory obligation apart, the school is committed to improvements in attendance standards as a direct stimulus to raising pupil achievement.
- Poor attendance is destructive to educational achievement, learning and progress, undermines the well-being of each pupil and demoralises staff.
- The Local authority has a statutory duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education and, if a registered pupil at school, this means attending school regularly and on time.

## Objectives

- To promote good attendance as this is vital to educational achievement. The school promote good attendance through child centred strategies
- To convey clearly to parents and pupils that:
  - regular attendance is essential;
  - unauthorised absence and persistent lateness is not acceptable;
  - only the headteacher in the context of the law can approve absence;
  - parental condoned, unjustifiable absence will be investigated and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- To keep records of attendance which:
  - clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence by pupils;
  - provide accurate information on actual attendance to enable monitoring and evaluation of school attendance rates through centrally held statistics.
- To build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by:
  - responding rapidly to pupil absence;
  - recognising pupils who maintain 'excellent', 'good' and 'improving' attendance records.
- To be sensitive to situations where regular attendance patterns are disrupted by external factors such as family bereavement.

## **Statutory Responsibilities**

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations (which relate to schools and Pupil Referral Units).

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "...the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/ her to receive full time education suitable to his/ her age, aptitude and ability and to any special education needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise..."
- Section 444 further states " ..the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law..."

Compulsory school age means that children and young people should attend school from the start of the first term commencing after their fifth birthday and are of compulsory school age until after the last Friday in June of the school year in which they have their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence);
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
- the absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/ parent belongs;
- the school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and suitable transport arrangements have not been made by the LA;. The law relating to walking distance effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under eight and three miles for all other pupils. Distance will be measured by nearest available walking route;

Absence from the centres will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- sickness;
- unavoidable medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances,

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- shopping;
- haircuts;
- missed bus;
- overslept;
- no uniform;
- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents;
- minding the house;
- birthdays;

- holidays / day trips taken in term time (exceptional circumstances will be considered, and a holiday request form will need to be completed by parents before the holiday is taken).

Parents are asked to make all medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

## School Day

09:00 – 09:15	Registration
12:15 – 13:30	Lunchtime – Rec, Yr 1 & yr 2
12:30 – 13:30	Lunchtime – Yr3 - 6
13:30 – 13:35	Registration
15:30	End of school day

ATTENDANCE %	LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	OUTCOME
95-100% attendance	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.
90-95% attendance	At least 2 weeks of learning missed	Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work.
85-90% attendance	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work.
80-85% attendance	At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed	Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.
Below 80% attendance	At least 7½ weeks of learning missed	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

The school encourages good attendance and punctuality by;

- creating a caring and nurturing environment whereby pupils' feels safe and appreciated as young adults;
- developing positive relationships with parents / carers and external agencies working with the family/ pupil;
- monitoring and evaluating the early intervention strategies adopted by the school;
- working closely with multi agency colleagues and the School service to improve attendance and punctuality;
- monitoring attendance data and trends and reporting this information termly to the Governing Body.

## ***Specific actions***

- *The school will make its policy on attendance clear to parents and pupils through: the initial transition meeting prior to admission.*
- The school will also communicate the importance of attendance to parents and pupils through assemblies, newsletters and the school website / Facebook page.
- If no contact is received by the parent/ carer of an absent pupil on the first morning of the absence, a telephone call is made by the school's administration staff to investigate the reason for the absence. If the school is not able to contact the family then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (N no reason yet provided for absence).
- Details of the absence are recorded, if later received, and discussed with the headteacher and a decision will be made with regards to authorisation as soon as possible. The headteacher may ask the Education Inclusion Service for advice with regards to this but the decision to authorise any absence remains with the school.
- If the pupil is registered as a Child in Need or on the Child Protection register and absent from school without reason, then the school should contact Powys front Door (01597) 827666 as soon as possible.
- if an absence remains unexplained for 3 consecutive days then arrangements should be made to visit the home.
  - When a pupil returns to school from an absence, but no explanation is offered, contact will be made with the parent.
  - A letter will also be sent out if a pupil is persistently late to school.
  - Ultimately, if an attendance matter cannot be resolved by the school and the appropriate steps have been followed (as outlined in the 'Attendance Pathway'), then a referral will be made to the LA Service for further investigation.
  - A request to the Local Authority for legal action can be made by the school, police or from within the local authority itself in relation to poor attendance at school.

**The school will also:**

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law relating to school attendance;
- complete school registers at the start of the morning session and afternoon session – the register is open for **15** minutes and closes at **9:15** am and **13:35** pm
- stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence;
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence;
- consult with all members of the school's community and LA Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy;
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance by the Governing Body;
- work towards ensuring all pupils are supported and valued and so want to attend school.

### **The Designated Member of Staff**

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. There is, however, a designated member of staff for attendance matters and all staff are able to discuss individual pupil attendance with this person. The Designated Member of Staff for Attendance:

- monitors the school's registers;
- liaises with teaching staff,
- meets with the LA Officer on a regular pre-arranged basis;
- refers to other agencies if appropriate;
- refers to the school nurse if there are doubts about the validity of an illness;
- oversees the use of standardised letters to parents addressing specific aspects of attendance and requiring parental response,
- arranges for an attendance meeting in the case of repeated, unexplained absences (school will consider inviting the named governor for attendance to such a meeting);
- ensures that the LA Officer's role is known and understood in school.

### **Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn (parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- attend parents' evenings and other school events, if possible;



- ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- be aware of letters from school which their child brings home or any other communication from the school;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence;
- confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

### **Penalty Notices**

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school and alternative provisions is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. In law, an offence occurs if a parent / carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school / alternative provision and that absence is not authorised by the school. The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice) (Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LAs) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include Penalty Charge Notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

If a pupil has:

- a minimum of 10 sessions (five school days) that have been lost due to unauthorised absences during the current term and this brings the overall pupil's attendance to below 90% in the school year (these absences do not have to be consecutive)
  - unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term-time if the absences take a pupil's overall school attendance to below 90% in the school year to date (these absences do not have to be consecutive), or
  - persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed at least 10 sessions of late arrival (U code) within a term; these do not need to be consecutive but should bring a pupil's overall school attendance to under 90% in the school year to date.
- A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice;
  - This rises to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt;
  - If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42 days the local authority must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.

The prosecution proceedings will be for the offence of failing to secure the child's regular attendance at school and not for non-payment of the penalty fine. The prosecution will be brought under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Withdrawal of the notice can only take place in limited circumstances as set out in the Code of Conduct.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to allow children to achieve their full potential during term time at school. Regular attendance also ensures that children are safe and lessens the opportunities to become involved in truancy and associated anti-social activities.

For further information on Penalty Charge Notices please refer to the Code of Conduct which can be found on:

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/schools-students/school-attendance-welfare/>

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/cy/ysgolion-a-myfyrwyr/school-attendance-welfare/>

It is important to note that if there are no valid reasons for non-attendance then there are a range of legal measures that may be implemented by the LA; these can include the issue of FPN's, Education Prosecutions, Education Supervision Orders and School Attendance orders.

The Local Authority can apply for an Education Supervision Order under section 36 Children's Act 1989 if it believes a child of compulsory school age is not being properly educated. This can include irregular attendance at school.

## **REGISTRATION**

### **Keeping the registers**

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It will also be used for end of term reports, records of achievement and reference requests, and information for other schools, LAs and external agencies.

- No pupil should be marked present unless actually in attendance at school or other agreed educational activity.
- The register should not have missing marks.
- When a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupils should be marked as late but counted as present for the session.
- When a pupil misses registration, she/ he should be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a medical letter/ phone call by parent is received and deemed to be genuine.
- Pupils should not have access to the register.
- The headteacher is the only person who can authorise that a pupil be removed from the register – this can only be done with the agreement of the LA.

### **Lateness**

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parent of a pupil who is persistently late is guilty of an offence, the law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if persistent late arrival (late after the register closes) is not resolved.

### **Holidays**

Headteachers do have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday or trips. Powys EWS strongly advising that any holidays or day trips in term time should be unauthorised, and that there should be no exceptions to this policy. The school adheres to this and family holidays during term time will not be authorised.

## Registration Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Off Site Education
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
D	Dual Registered i.e Present at another school or PRU
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
G	Family holiday (Not agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (Before the registers closed)
M	Medical / Dental Appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Absence (Not covered by other code)
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational Visit or Trip
W	Work experience
Y	Partial or Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
#	School closed to all pupils
Z	Pupils not on roll yet

**Monitoring and evaluation of policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date passed by Governing Body

.....24.09.2024.....

Chairman

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Designated Governor for school attendance

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